



Tackling Root causes Upstream of  
Unhealthy Urban Development

# Integrating health in local plans: an impact evaluation

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TRUUD

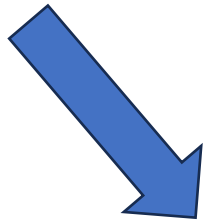


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Manchester: Transport planning

*Aim: To work with decision makers and communities to prioritise health in urban decision-making processes.*



Bristol: Spatial planning



Integrating health into local development planning policies ('local plans')

# Background

- Local plans are used by local planning authorities in England to shape urban regeneration and other land use management.
- Developers are expected to address local planning requirements and guidelines.
- The promotion of health is a central principle of local plans; however, the planning system lacks a systematic approach. (Grant and Barton, 2013)
- There is a need for better integration and prioritisation of health in local plans if planning policy is to have a meaningful impact on promoting health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. (Le Gouais et al., 2023)



# Integrating health in local plans

**Study 1:** A framework review of the integration of health in local plans from seven local planning authorities.

**Study 2:** Evaluation to understand the process, value and impact of framework application, and translation of framework into transferable and sustainable guidance.



# Study 1: Methods

Framework co-produced with local public health and planning policy practitioners from a local government partner.

Framework used to examine:

- How health is defined.
- The specific health-related requirements and determinants of health that developers are expected to address.
- How plans encourage delivery of the developer requirements.



Word search and detailed reading of local plan documents to identify explicit policy (or requirement within a policy).

Traffic light system used to indicate presence, partial presence, or absence of health features.

# Study 1: Results

Similarities and good policy language identified across all seven local plans, in terms of the health-specific requirements and policies.

**Opportunities to strengthen** the integration of health in local plans:

1. Ensure that policies are informed by and signpost to local health priorities.
2. Signpost to national guidance and standards.
3. Strengthen health-related requirements for developers, including indoor air quality, access to daylight, fuel poverty and security of tenure.
4. Improve the implementation of requirements for developers, through adopting health management plans, monitoring and community ownership models.



# Study 2: Methods

Evaluation of **value and impact** of using the review framework and **translation** of framework into transferable and sustainable guidance

## Data collection and analysis

- Stakeholder interviews (including representatives from public health and planning policy teams and local councillors).
- Minutes of Local Plan Working Group meetings.
- Fieldnotes collected by Researcher-in-Residence.
- Framework analysis.

## Interviews explored:

- Awareness/relevance/use of review
- Reflections on review recommendations
- Local and wider system-level barriers/facilitators to integrating health
- Responsibilities for health
- Cross-team working relationships and contributions

## Study 2: Early observations

Positive feedback from planning and public health teams

*"I think health is considered [in the local plan]...a lot of that is attributed back to TRUUD's involvement in supporting us to do that."*

(Public Health)

Value of sharing best practice/evidence

*"...having that evidence of what other local authorities do was really important."*

(Planning Officer)

Competing priorities and resource constraints – impact on sustainability?

*"...[The planning team is] very competent, very up-to-date on things. Like everything else they're under resourced, everything in local government is under resourced at the moment."*

(Local Councillor)

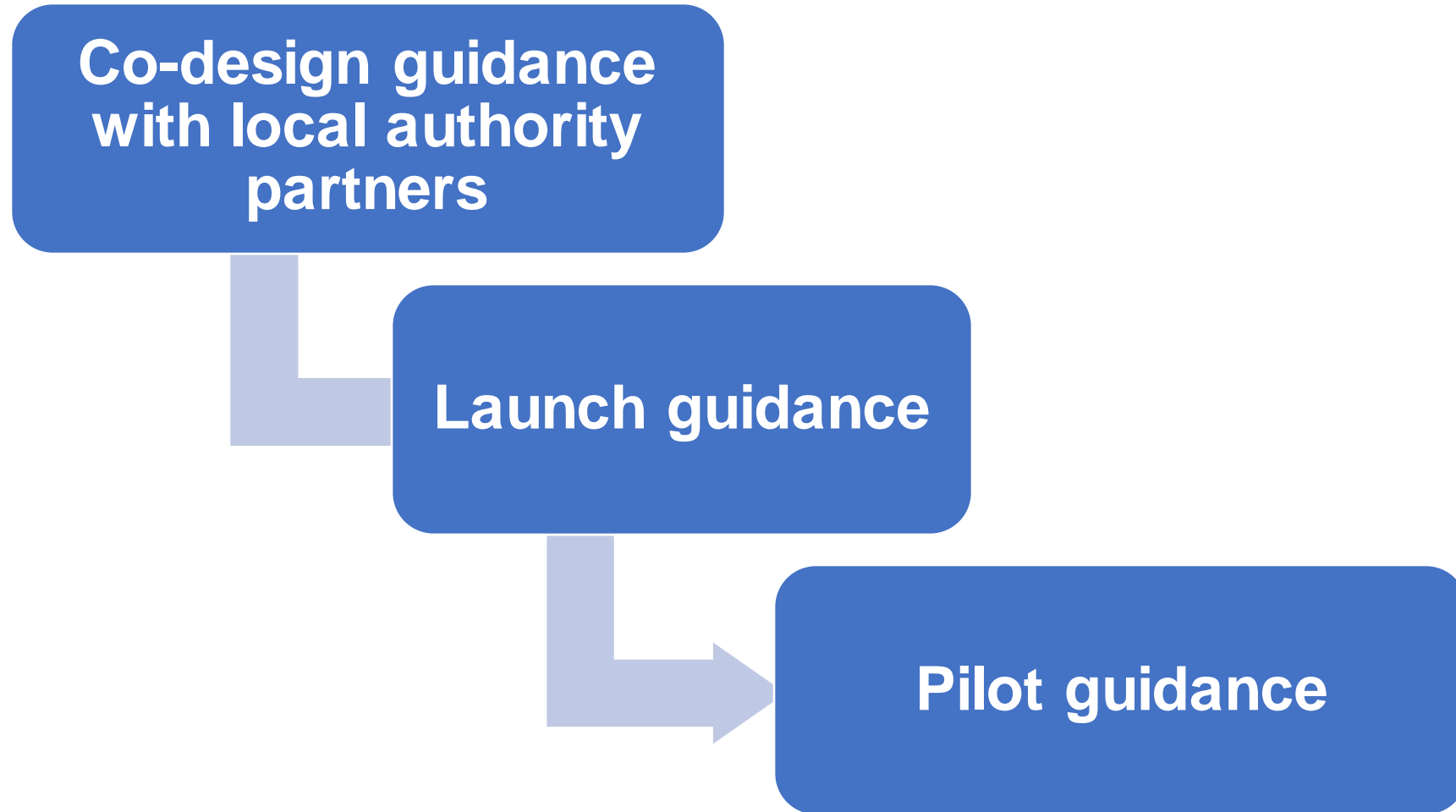
Complexity of the planning system

*"They're all very helpful recommendations, but...[the researcher] isn't the planner, and I'm a planner and I still don't understand anything to do with planning. It's pretty vast and nebulous."*

(Planning Officer)



# Next steps




# Thank you for listening

My thanks to colleagues Rosalie Callway, Anna Le Gouais, Michael Chang, Judi Kidger, Katharine Hanss.

Any questions?

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